

For Immediate Release | July 8, 2019

## Be prepared for wildfire smoke events

Wildfires are a regular part of summer in British Columbia, and with wildfires comes the potential for wildfire smoke pollution. The best way to protect your health from wildfire smoke pollution is to be prepared with ways to reduce your exposure to smoke.

Here are seven steps that you can take to prepare for wildfire smoke events:

1. **Ensure cleaner indoor air:** Clean indoor air is important when seeking relief from smoky skies. Purchase a [portable air cleaner](#) that uses high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration to remove smoke from indoor air.
2. **Know where to find cleaner air:** Many large public spaces may provide cooler and cleaner air. Know where those places are in your community. They may be libraries, community centres, shopping malls, etc.
3. **Be aware of people who need extra care:** People with chronic conditions such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes, as well as pregnant women, infants, and young children, are most affected by wildfire smoke. If you or your loved ones are at increased risk, work with your health-care provider to create a management plan for smoky periods.
4. **Have a smoke contingency plan:** If you are planning an outdoor event or activity, especially with those most at risk, ensure that you have an alternate plan in case the smoke levels are unacceptable.
5. **Have a plan for rescue medications:** If you use rescue medications, such as asthma inhalers, make sure you have a supply at home and always carry them with you during wildfire season. Have a plan to follow if your rescue medications cannot bring your condition under control.
6. **Review resources from WorkSafe BC:** If you work outdoors, review [WorkSafe BC resources](#) and be aware of your occupational health and safety policies and procedures for wildfire smoke events.
7. **Check the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) and follow the advice:** The [AQHI](#) is a scale designed to help you understand what the air quality around you means to your health. The AQHI also provides important advice on how to protect your health during air quality levels associated with low, moderate, high, and very high health risks.

For general information about smoke and your health, contact HealthLink BC toll-free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 8-1-1.

### Additional resources:

- BC CDC Fact Sheet – [How to prepare for the wildfire smoke season](#)
- BC CDC Fact Sheet – [Portable air cleaners for wildfire smoke](#)
- BC CDC Fact Sheet – [Health effects of wildfire smoke](#)
- Government of BC – [Air Quality Health Index](#)
- HealthLink BC - [Wildfires and your health](#)

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*Interior Health is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and providing a wide range of quality health-care services to more than 750,000 people living across B.C.'s vast interior. For more information, visit [www.interiorhealth.ca](http://www.interiorhealth.ca), follow us on Twitter [@Interior\\_Health](https://twitter.com/Interior_Health), follow us on Instagram [@weareIH](https://www.instagram.com/weareIH), or like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/InteriorHealth](https://www.facebook.com/InteriorHealth).*

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